

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01

OMB-01 TRSE-00 DRC-01 CIEP-02 STR-08 /184 W

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R 081735Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5433

INFO AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 13070

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, SF, UK

SUBJECT: OFFICIAL DISCUSSES TUC ROLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

REFWC JOHANNESBURG 0995

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ALAN HARGREAVES, HEAD OF THE TUC'S INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT, INTERPRETS THE TUC'S LIKELY FUTURE ROLE IN SOUTH AFRICA IN TERMS OF POLITICAL RESTRAINT, CAUTION AND PATIENCE. HARGREAVES' REMARKS FOLLOWED THE VISIT OF THE TUC DELEGATION TO SOUTH AFRICA OCTOBER 6-20 (REFTEL). END SUMMARY

2. HARGREAVES DISCUSSED THE RECENT VISIT OF THE TUC DELEGATION TO SOUTH AFRICA OF WHICH HE WAS A MEMBER, WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS. HE EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE
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CAUTION ON WHAT AN EXTERNAL ORGANIZATION SUCH AS THE

BRITISH TUC COULD ACHIEVE IN SOUTH AFRICA FROM THE OUTSIDE. HE SAID THAT PRIME MINISTER VORSTER IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ABOUT ANY MOVES MADE INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY WHICH WOULD UPSET THE POLITICAL BALANCE OR WOULD ATTEMPT TO MODIFY IN ANY SERIOUS WAY HIS FUNDAMENTAL POLICIES IN DEALING WITH BLACK AFRICANS. HARGREAVES ACCEPTS IN ESSENCE VORSTER'S CONCERN AND BELIEVES THE TUC SHOULD AVOID ANY APPEARANCE OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, HARGREAVES BELIEVES THAT VORSTER IS PREPARED TO SEE AN IMPROVED ROLE FOR BLACKS WITHIN THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM OF SOUTH AFRICA, PROVIDING IT IS APPROACHED WITH GREAT CARE. ACCORDING TO HARGREAVES, THE PRIME MINISTER CLEARLY IMPLIED IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH VIC FEATHER AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION THAT SOME KIND OF EVENTUAL TRADE UNION REPRESENTATION OF BLACKS SHOULD BE FOUND, ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTED THAT VORSTER HAD NOT AT ANY TIME SAID THAT HE FAVORED CREATION OF BLACK TRADE UNIONS. (DESPITE MINISTER OF LABOR BILJOEN'S PUBLIC DENIAL THAT THIS WAS IN FACT VORSTER'S VIEW, THE PRIME MINISTER, HARGREAVES NOTED, HAS MADE NO FURTHER COMMENT.)

4. THE TUC OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE "GOVERNMENT CONCEDES THEY WANT TO SEE BLACK REPRESENTATION IN THE FACTORIES, THE EMPLOYERS ARE NOT NEGATIVE, BUT THE WHITE AND COLORED TRADE UNIONS ARE OPPOSED TO PARALLEL UNIONS." THE TUCSA, STIMULATED BY ITS BOILERMAKER UNION AFFILIATE, IS PREPARED TO SEE BLACKS WITHIN THEIR ORGANIZATION BUT ONLY IF THE WHITES CAN MAINTAIN A 10 TO 1 POWER SUPERIORITY. AS HARGREAVES PUT IT, THE TUCSA WISHES TO "DEFEND THE SKILLED MAN'S PRIVILEGE IN INDUSTRY."

5. HARGREAVES VIEWS THE OFFICIAL TRADE UNION ESTABLISHMENT AS THE REAL STUMBLING BLOCK TO CHANGE, ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVES THAT SOONER OR LATER IT, TOO, WILL SEE ITS OWN INTERESTS SERVED BY HELPING BLACK WORKERS, BY SERVICING THEM, BY PROVIDING THEM WITH OTHER FORMS

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OF SUPPORT, AND BY ACCEPTING THE FACT OF BLACK TRADE UNION REPRESENTATION. HE CHARACTERIZED THE EMPLOYER VIEW AS BEING RELATIVELY MORE ENLIGHTENED IN THAT "THEY ARE FRETFUL, AND ARE CONCERNED THAT THEY DON'T GET TOO MUCH OUT OF THEIR CONTACTS WITH THE LIAISON COMMITTEES OF BLACK WORKERS IN THE PLANTS."

6. HARGREAVES ALSO NOTED THE WORK DONE BY NON-UNION

GROUPS SUCH AS THE NUSAS IN CAPE TOWN, THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES IN DURBAN AND THE URBAN TRAINING PROJECT IN JOHANNESBURG WHICH HAVE TRIED TO HELP BLACK WORKERS IN PROVIDING ADVICE, EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND OTHER ASSISTANCE. WHILE THIS WORK IS HELPFUL, HARGREAVES BELIEVES IT IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR DIRECT TRADE UNION WORK.

7. DESPITE THE GENERAL IMPRESSION ABROAD, HARGREAVES

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BELIEVES THE REAL ISSUE FOR BLACK WORKERS IS NOT WAGES BUT JOB ADVANCEMENT. MOST EMPLOYERS ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE IDEA OF JOB ADVANCEMENT FOR BLACKS BUT ARE CAUGHT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION AND PUBLIC OPINION. SOME EMPLOYERS, SUCH AS CHRYSLER, FAVOR A

SYSTEM WHERE BLACKS CAN WORK IN SKILLED JOBS PROVIDING IT IS PERFORMED UNDER NOMINAL WHITE SUPERVISION. IF THIS CAN'T BE DONE ELSEWHERE, CHRYSLER WOULD BE PREPARED, ACCORDING TO HARGREAVES, TO SET UP PLANTS DIRECTLY IN THE AFRICAN HOMELANDS IN ORDER TO MAKE USE OF THE VAST RESERVOIR OF SKILLS WHICH EXIST THERE.

8. HARGREAVES BELIEVES THAT THE TUC SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON "BRITISH-LINKED" FIRMS. HE SEES LITTLE VALUE IN HAVING BILATERAL COOPERATIVE PROJECTS WITH OTHER TRADE UNION CENTERS, SUCH AS THE AFL-CIO OR THE GERMAN DGB,
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PREFERRING INSTEAD A DIVISION OF LABOR AMONG DIFFERENT INTERESTED GROUPS INCLUDING THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS, EACH WORKING IN AN AREA OF ITS OWN CHOOSING.

9. COMMENT: A BRITISH TUC POSITION ON NEXT STEPS TO BE TAKEN HAS NOT YET BEEN FORMULATED. HARGREAVES IS IN THE PROCESS OF PREPARING A REPORT OF THE MISSION'S VISIT FOR SUBMISSION TO THE DECEMBER MEETING OF THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL. HIS OWN APPROACH, IN CONTRAST TO THAT OF SOME OF THE TUC LEADERSHIP, IS CAUTIOUS AND CAREFUL, WITH EMPHASIS ON LOW KEY, DISCREET ASSISTANCE TO BLACK WORKERS, AT A LEVEL ACCEPTABLE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. THE TUC, IN HIS VIEW, SHOULD ALSO TRY TO INFLUENCE UK EMPLOYERS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN SUBSIDIARIES. HE IS COGNIZANT OF THE POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER, THAT SOME OF THE TUC LEADERSHIP, MOST NOTABLY JACK JONES, WHO IS CHAIRMAN OF THE TUC'S INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE, MAY WISH TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVIST APPROACH.

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